

REMARKS

The present application was filed on November 15, 2000 with claims 1 through 12. Claims 1 through 12 are presently pending in the above-identified patent application.

5 In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 7, 8, 10, and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Braden-Harder et al. (United States Patent Number 5,933,822) and rejected claims 3-6, 9, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Braden-Harder et al. in view of Diamond (United States Patent Number 6,269,368). Applicants assume the Examiner also meant to reject claim 2 under
10 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Braden-Harder et al.

Independent Claims 1, 7 and 12

Independent claims 1 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Braden-Harder et al. and claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Braden-Harder et al. in view of Diamond.

15 Regarding claims 1 and 7, the Examiner asserts that Braden-Harder discloses presenting the best scoring possible answer to the user with context from the passage containing the answer. Regarding claim 12, the Examiner asserts that Diamond teaches scoring each possible answer phrase, selecting one or more of the best scoring answer phrases, and displaying the answer phrases to the user.

20 Applicants note that the present invention is directed to selecting *answers* to natural language questions “from a pool of potential answers which are manually or automatically extracted from a large collection of textual documents.” (Page 1, lines 9-11.) Thus, answers are *not documents* but are *short snippets or “snippets of text (e.g., phrases) which provide the exact answer to the question.”* (Page 1, lines 21-23.)

25 Although Braden-Hader utilizes natural language processing to identify documents that are relevant to a query, Braden-Harder discloses that the processor “presents the retained *documents* to the user rank-ordered based on their score.” (Col. 8, lines 2-4; emphasis added.) As with most conventional search engines, Braden-Harder simply returns documents. Braden-Harder does not attempt to present *answers with context from a relevant passage*. Independent claim 1 requires “presenting the best scoring possible answer to the user *with context from the passage* containing the answer.” Independent

claim 7 requires an *answer selection module* and an *answer presentation module*. Independent claim 12 requires *scoring “each possible answer phrase, selecting one or more of the best scoring answer phrases, and displaying the answer phrases to the user.”* Braden-Harder does not disclose or suggest any of these limitations.

5 Applicants also note that Diamond is directed to a system and method for improving information retrieval effectiveness by dynamically combining evidence information produced by a plurality of retrieval systems matching alternative representations of queries and documents. (See, Abstract.) As with most conventional search engines, Diamond simply returns documents. Diamond does not attempt to
10 present *answers with context from a relevant passage*.

Thus, Braden-Harder and Diamond, alone or in combination, do not disclose or suggest presenting the best scoring possible answer to the user with context from the passage containing the answer, as required by claim 1, do not disclose or suggest an answer selection module and an answer presentation module, as required by
15 independent claim 7, and do not disclose or suggest scoring each possible answer phrase, selecting one or more of the best scoring answer phrases, and displaying the answer phrases to the user, as required by independent claim 12.

Dependent Claims 2-6 and 8-11

Dependent claims 8, 10, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as
20 being anticipated by Braden-Harder et al. and claims 3-6 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Braden-Harder et al. in view of Diamond.

Claims 2-6 and 8-11 are dependent on claims 1 and 7, respectively, and are therefore patentably distinguished over Braden-Harder et al. and Diamond (alone or in combination) because of their dependency from independent claims 1 and 7 for the
25 reasons set forth above, as well as other elements these claims add in combination to their base claim.

All of the pending claims, i.e., claims 1-12, are in condition for allowance and such favorable action is earnestly solicited.

If any outstanding issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further
30 suggestions for expediting allowance of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

The Examiner's attention to this matter is appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,



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